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OCTOBER MEETING, 1894.

THE stated meeting, the first since the summer vacation, was held on Thursday, the 11th instant, at three o'clock, P. M. ; the President, Dr. GEORGE E. ELLIS, in the chair.

The record of the June meeting was read and approved ; and the list of donors to the Library was also read. The Corresponding Secretary said that he had received letters of acceptance from Rt. Rev. William Lawrence, D.D., elected a Resident Member, and Capt. Alfred T. Mahan, U. S. N., elected a Corresponding Member.

The PRESIDENT then said : —

In our association here, we have our full share in the minglings of sorrow with grateful and heartfelt elegiac tributes which have been drawn from our whole community during this week, as the gifted and beloved, the admired and venerated chief in our world of literature, culture, and song has passed from among the living. It is true that in the limited numbers and 'in the single field of study of our Society, we have no special claim to assert a prominence among those who equally with ourselves are members of that wide fellowship of humanity which he delighted, instructed, and served. Too rich and versatile, too large and fruitful in their wealth and exuberance, were the gifts committed to him, and his lavish scatterings from them, to permit an appropriation of him by any professional or social circle. Still we may remind ourselves that this little fellowship of ours engaged his warm attachment and his loving service. We have but to run our eyes through the indexes of our published volumes to note how frequent, and, in their matter, of interest and value, were his contributions to our work during the thirty-seven years of his membership. If it had been left to him to choose the time and the occasion for his last presence in these halls, what could have been more grateful to him and to us than when, eleven months since, he read to us that noble tribute of his own favoring muse to the foremost of our

historical writers, Francis Parkman! Yet had he been wont only to sit silent and idle in our circle here, we all of us realize what pleasure it was to us to respond to his genial, inquisitive, sympathetic look, watching for any chance gleam of humor from our dry themes, yet fully responsive with a grave recognition to matters of weight and seriousness. Like Longfellow and Emerson and others of our elders, at a period of years when, as it is written, men "are afraid of that which is high," he cheered his ascent to our elevated shrine by saying to himself that he was mounting to the "High-story-cal Society."

It is a cheering reminder that health and pleasure, and all that ministers to them, so prevail over invalidism that *Professor* Holmes, who devoted his most laborious years to medical science in our University and to the training of thirty-five classes of physicians, is scarcely recognized as such by those admiring readers of his radiant pages. Yet the discerning among those readers must have noted tokens of a keen professional instinct in a certain pathological element alike in his prose and verse. It is for others, elsewhere and through the various and abounding mediums, to apply the tests and methods of critical estimate to the gifts and quality of his genius, his rank among his peers in mental endowment and productions, and the permanence of his popularity and fame. To us, whose rich privilege it has been here and elsewhere in many social and private circles to know in daily intimacy the man of so sunny a spirit, of so joyous a heart, of so kindly a soul, all gracious and loving memories remain. In him were negatived many current cynical literary proverbs, — such as that of the irritability of genius, and that the Muses will not respond when summoned for poems written to order. He needs no gentle condonings for temper, manners, morals, or personal indulgence. Pure, serene, refined, elevated in the spirit, tone, and tenor of his life, — *serus in cælum rediit*, — he left behind him a ripe harvesting from the fruits and the flowers of existence.

The PRESIDENT having called on the Hon. WILLIAM EVERETT, Mr. Everett said that Dr. Holmes had, by his own example, prescribed the method by which he should be commemorated, and read the following poem: —

One poet more, transferred to Homer's train ;
One healer more, removed to Galen's side ;
One more gold link upon our heroes' chain, —
One friend the less, who never should have died.

Friend, patriot, healer, poet, wit, and sage, —
How hard, how strange, to count him with the past !
We heard his gentle jests on time and age,
Nor dreamed such foes could win the fight at last.

Who for that grave may twine a fitting crown,
Where memory's pansy blends with glory's bay ?
Whose pen like his, for ever now laid down,
Tender to feel, and lively to portray ?

Yet, while from yonder tower he loved so long
Still chime the echoes of his funeral psalm,
Let not the master lack one modest song,
Till bolder hands shall plant some statelier palm.

No single flower that garland can supply,
Such vast and varied springs his genius held,
Whence through a score of channels, never dry,
Fresh, deep, and pure, their shining currents welled.

Sprung from New England's chiefs and saints of yore,
His heart was rooted to her soil alone,
Nor siren charms from lands the ocean o'er
E'er shook his proud allegiance to his own.

Born where our ancient college throws her shade,
He served, he loved her, student to the last ;
While o'er her sons in festive ranks arrayed
His genial Muse unfailing fragrance cast.

In love he practised, and in patience taught,
The sacred art that battles with disease ;
Nor stained, by one disloyal act or thought,
The holy symbol of Hippocrates.

His lyre through every mood of music rang,
The banquet's carol, and the battle's hymn ;
Now warbling like a child at play, it sang,
Now soared to echoes of the seraphim.

Lustrous and leaping, like the Boreal dawn,
His wit o'er every theme ranged unconfined ;
Flashed like a rapier's point in combat drawn,
But drew no blood, and left no sore behind.

Wide as our country, wide as England's tongue,
Flew his bright name, itself a household word ;
How frankly proud to all those wreaths he clung,
How kindly caught each breath of praise he heard !

Dear were those plaudit notes ; but dearer far
One treasure, prized o'er all that high renown,
Friendship's gemmed circlet, every friend a star,
Outshining victor's helm or empire's crown.

So lived, so sang, so talked he ; youth's gay beam,
Manhood's hot splendor, age's milder glow,
Each in its turn might fairest radiance seem,
As year by year we watched them shine and go.

Threescore and ten with gentle footstep came,
Nor labor pressed, nor sorrow, at fourscore ;
One lustre more ; then rang his summoned name
In softest music through Elysium's door.

His bright task wrought, his meed of glory won,
His country honored, and his kind improved :
Room there is none for tears ; yet tears will run,
For bard, for master, and for friend removed.

The PRESIDENT said that he had received a letter from Judge Hoar, expressing regret at his inability to be present at the meeting : —

CONCORD, Oct. 10, 1894.

DEAR DR. ELLIS, — I regret very much that I cannot be present when the virtues and graces of our dear Dr. Holmes are commemorated by the Massachusetts Historical Society. . But it is entirely out of my power.

I am confident no writer since Walter Scott has given so much pleasure to so many English-speaking people as he. How we shall miss him !

Sorrowfully yours,

E. R. HOAR.

Rev. Dr. ELLIS.

Mr. HENRY LEE spoke in substance as follows:—

After the President's discriminating remarks and Dr. Everett's sympathetic verses, my only excuse for saying a few words is that my point of view is not that of a scholar, but of a friend and kinsman.

Our common ancestor, Edward Jackson, of Harvard College, 1726, married Dorothy Quincy, whom Dr. Holmes has embalmed. He had two children; the son was my grandfather, the daughter his grandmother. Always on familiar terms, for seventeen summers we have been neighbors at Beverly Farms, in closer communion, holding stated meetings every Sunday after church, — which, by the way, he invariably attended, whatever the creed or whoever the preacher. He will be missed from his accustomed seat in the old King's Chapel, which he has filled for over fifty years.

At these weekly sessions discussion ranged far and wide. There was no assumption of superiority on his part, such as I have sometimes encountered from literary men; but there was, on each side, an eagerness to talk which had to be regulated, after parliamentary usage, by the mistress of the house.

An old gentleman, speaking of Judge Charles Jackson, the father of Mrs. Holmes, told me that when, as referee, he decided a case, both parties were satisfied, such was their confidence in his equity; and his daughter presided over this court of appeal with like acquiescence.

In this intimacy I traversed the opinions and convictions, the sympathies and gentle antipathies, of my brilliant, discursive cousin, the Autocrat; observed his domestic habits and relations, and learned the rewards and penalties of his popularity.

He was most happy in his marriage. The executive ability and unselfish devotion manifested by his wife when at the head of the Boston Sanitary Commission, during the Civil War, were lavished upon her family; her delicate perceptions and quick sympathies made her a delightful companion and a competent critic of her husband's prose or poetry.

It was pleasant to meet them in their daily walks, gayly chatting with each other or with a neighbor, or stooping to caress a little child. These daily walks have been persevered in to the end, in spite of solitude, partial blindness, and

increasing infirmities ; and so have his kindly relations with neighbors, his playful and tender intercourse with children.

I have had two sets of grandchildren dwelling near him, and I will venture to say that he never passed them without a pleasant word ; and he not only saluted them, but he noticed their traits.

A neighbor told me that when Dr. Holmes dwelt in Charles Street, and passed daily through Cambridge Street to the Medical School, he was wont to stop on his way to speak to the school-children, to give them words to spell, to laugh over their blunders, and to reward them with pennies. He was blessed with a real gayety of heart, — a quality too rare among us descendants of Puritans, — inherited, perhaps, from his Dutch ancestors.

He had much mechanical ingenuity, — made several inventions, besides improving the stereoscope ; but in some business ways he was amusingly helpless, and, as I have occasion to know, very grateful for assistance.

His kindness of heart was exercised, but not exhausted, by the bores who besieged him with visits and letters, — who showered upon him their essays to be read, their aspirations to be considered, and often rewarded his patient endurance and merciful judgments with an outburst of ingratitude. His charity for these and other offences was habitual ; he was quite capable of receiving, but not of inflicting, wounds ; nor did he harbor resentments.

He has been called vain, by himself and others ; but it was vanity of an amiable and childlike kind, — confessed, and so apologized for ; not denied or disguised or justified. It was not made offensive by superciliousness, nor contemptible by unmanliness, nor malignant by envy. Had he visited Rotten Row, and gazed at the well-born, well-dressed, well-mounted equestrians, he would have exulted over their bright array, and not have growled out, as Carlyle did, “ There is not one of them can do what I can do.” He would not, like Moore, have abused his honest and generous publisher ; nor would he, like him, upon the loss of a child, have lain abed to revel in his grief, leaving his “ dear Bessie,” as he called his wife, to perform the last sad offices. He would not — as did one author with whom I had formerly lived on terms of equality, but who afterward acquired fame and riches — have called

upon me to mark him extraordinary, not in the roll of common men, by cutting off the coupons from his goodly pile of bonds,—a service not rendered to his four thousand fellow-customers.

Lowell wrote a witty paper on “A Certain Condescension in Foreigners”; he might have followed it by “A Certain Condescension in Literary Men.”

When I read the correspondence between Emerson and Carlyle, it struck me how much more and better they would have written had they been bound to some task every morning; if manual, all the better. Emerson recognizes this in many passages: “The use of manual labor is one which never grows obsolete, and which is inapplicable to no person. . . . We must have a basis for our higher accomplishments, our delicate entertainments of poetry and philosophy, in the work of our hands. Not only health, but enterprise is in the work.”

Fortunate for Charles Lamb was his enforced drudgery “at the desk’s dead wood.” It was this routine that braced him for his congenial labors. After his long-coveted liberation, he ran and frisked about like a colt in a pasture, and then subsided; the “unchartered freedom” made him restless, but not productive.

Fortunate for Dr. Holmes his practice and his lectures for thirty-five years. It gave him promptness, accountability, resolution, touch with the world. It was this commerce with the world that widened his observations and his sympathy; it was this which inclined him, it was this discipline which enabled him, to respond so constantly and so heartily to the appeal for occasions,—a well-performed service which endeared him to the great public.

The champagne, the effervescence, will be lacking at many a gathering now that he is gone; he stands out from all other poets by his cheerful and hearty co-operation.

Who now can catch inspiration from the passing event, and express felicitously the feeling agitating every breast, as did our lost friend?

One more trait, and that a most amiable one, characterized him,—a remarkable magnanimity; he gave an ungrudging tribute of praise to his brethren, he had “the most catholic receptivity for the genius of others.”

In short, he was very human in weakness and in strength; love and good-will he freely bestowed, and love and good-will he craved in turn, and he received in full measure.

"I do not know what special gifts have been granted or denied me, but this I know, — that I am like so many others of my fellow-creatures that when I smile I feel as if they must, when I cry I think their eyes fill; and it always seems to me that when I am most truly myself, I come nearest to them, and am surest of being listened to by the brothers and sisters of the larger family into which I was born so long ago."

"He sings no more on earth; our vain desire
Aches for the voice we loved so long to hear."

The Hon. GEORGE F. HOAR referred briefly to Dr. Holmes's brilliant powers of conversation, and to his inexhaustible wisdom and wit, and remarked that the thousand gems which Dr. Holmes scattered in his ordinary talk, if they could have been saved, would have made an abundant supply for our literary men for a century to come.

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D., then spoke of Dr. Holmes's relation to Harvard University, in substance as follows: —

To the University Dr. Holmes was known as Professor in the Medical School for thirty-five years. He was first appointed in 1847 to a chair which, by its title, comprehended the two vast subjects of Anatomy and Physiology; and it was not till 1871 that he was relieved of the subject of Physiology. Officially charged with the care of these two immense fields, he was in the habit of also including in his instruction the elements of Histology and Microscopy, at a time when these two undeveloped but all-important subjects were new to the medical curriculum in this country. In teaching the elements of these two subjects he was distinctly a pioneer.

On his appointment in 1847 he immediately began to lecture five times a week, from November to March, at one o'clock in the afternoon. In 1857 he became an instructor in one of the summer schools of Medicine, in which instruction was maintained from March to November, with the exception of two midsummer months. In this school he usually lectured twice a week, and often gave additional instruction of a more indi-

vidual and intimate character. When the revolution took place in the Harvard Medical School in 1870-1871, Dr. Holmes's work was somewhat changed, but on the whole it was increased. For the rest of his term of service he lectured three, and part of the time four, times a week from October to June. His lectures were clear, interesting, fluent, and substantial; and they were illustrated by dissections and specimens, which he always insisted should be thoroughly prepared and delicately exhibited.

Most of us have been accustomed to think of Dr. Holmes as a brilliant essayist, talker, occasional lecturer, and poet; but the core of his day for thirty-five years was hard, consecutive, well-prepared medical teaching. Most men would have found the work he did as a medical teacher an adequate task in itself for thirty-five years of their prime.

Four years before he was elected Professor he published a striking medical essay, in which he maintained the contagiousness of puerperal fever. Year after year from the professor's chair he taught that that destructive fever was contagious, and was carried from patient to patient by the attending physician. I lately heard a distinguished medical expert, who by education and professional service is not of New England, publicly declare that one of the six great contributions which New England had made to the progress of Medicine was Dr. Holmes's teaching of the contagiousness of puerperal fever. The doctrine was not new; it had been taught even in the last century, and many of the cases on which Dr. Holmes relied were English, but the doctrine had not been accepted, and Dr. Holmes's essay of 1843 was attacked and ridiculed by some of the leading medical teachers in this country, and indeed at the time was rejected in practice by a large majority of the medical profession. Dr. Holmes lived to see the contagiousness of that fever absolutely demonstrated, and his doctrine universally accepted.

We may get some clear conception of the effect in this community of Dr. Holmes's insistence on good dissection in preparation for his lectures, if we consider the professional standing and services of the men who were Dr. Holmes's demonstrators and prosectors. They were Samuel Parkman, Frederick S. Ainsworth, Samuel Kneeland, Richard M. Hodges, David W. Cheever, Charles B. Porter, Henry H. A. Beach, and Maurice

H. Richardson. The anatomical attainments of these men were in some considerable measure due to their service under Dr. Holmes; and their skill, both as teachers and as surgeons, has been and will be of immeasurable value in this community.

At the time the important changes in the Harvard Medical School, already referred to, were made, Dr. Holmes had been a Professor there for twenty-four years, and was over sixty years of age. He had, therefore, reached the age when in most men conservatism becomes pronounced, and at which his habits of thought concerning his own teaching and the policy of the Medical Faculty might well have been fixed beyond the possibility of change. For several months he voted in the Medical Faculty on the conservative side, but with diminishing emphasis and ardor. The reiterated and accumulating arguments of the advocates of a fundamental change of policy took gradual effect on his open mind; and suddenly he changed sides in the Faculty, and became a convinced and unwavering supporter of the new policy, although the adoption of that policy would evidently cause deep and lasting changes in his own daily work, and in the School with which he had been familiar since 1833. In the fortunate results of the changes effected in 1870-1871 with his ultimate support, Dr. Holmes ever after took a lively interest, to which he often gave vivid expression.

Dr. Holmes's lectures, and all his intercourse with the students and the Faculty, were illuminated by the scintillations of his keen but kindly wit. He has himself said that one of the chief pleasures of life is frequent contact with alert, responsive intellects in great variety. To all who came close to him Dr. Holmes habitually gave this great pleasure with unflagging liberality.

As no other member desired to speak, the PRESIDENT suggested that instead of adopting any formal tribute in words to go on the record, the members should express by rising from their seats their grateful love and respect for the career so brilliantly run and so sweetly closed. All rose.

Dr. SAMUEL A. GREEN exhibited some rare engravings given by Mr. Charles F. Adams, and said:—

At a meeting of the Society held last February, I gave, in the name of our first Vice-President, Mr. Charles Francis Adams, a set of rare German prints, four in number, which represent scenes in the town of Boston during the Revolutionary period. Through his continued kindness, I now present for him seven more prints, belonging to the same series, of which five were made by the same engraver, François Xavier Habermann, and the other two by Balth. Frederic Leizelt, all published in Augsburg. Two of them represent scenes in New York, and the remaining five portray scenes in Quebec. Like the former prints, these Views are not dated, but they belong to the same period, and presumably are as fanciful in their origin; and, like that set, they are colored.

The legends under the engravings are in both German and French, and in the following list I give a free and somewhat abridged translation of such titles. Though the prints are unnumbered, I here speak of them by numbers.

No. 1. "Representation of the Great Fire in New York, during the night of September 19, 1776."

No. 2. "View of New York," by Balth. Frederic Leizelt.

No. 3. "View of Quebec (upper town)."

No. 4. "View of Recolets Street, Quebec (upper town)."

No. 5. "View of the Capital Square, Quebec (lower town)."

No. 6. "View of Quebec (lower town), toward the St. Lawrence River."

No. 7. "View of Quebec," by Balth. Frederic Leizelt.

Dr. GREEN also referred to some remarks by Judge Chamberlain, made at the June meeting, which appear in the new Serial now lying on the table. They describe the contribution of money by the church at Chelsea for the benefit of the distressed inhabitants of South Carolina and Georgia, who were driven away from their homes by the British troops during the Southern campaign of the Revolution. The learned Judge said that, while he had made no particular study of the subject, his sole knowledge of the fact was derived from a receipt of the money by one of the Boston agents, on December 14, 1781, which he read; and he expressed the hope that additional information might be gathered in regard to the interesting fact. He stated, furthermore, that no Massachusetts historian, so far as he knew, had mentioned the particulars of the

contribution, which was probably a general one, and not confined to any town or neighborhood. Judge Chamberlain's surmise as to the extent of the beneficent work was correct, as it spread over the whole Commonwealth.

The raising of the money by the various churches at that period for the relief of the Southern people was prompted by a Brief from the Governor; and he in his turn was instructed by the General Court to send such a letter to the several towns and districts within the Commonwealth.

The following Resolutions are found among the Massachusetts Archives (CCXXXIV. 366) at the State House: —

In Senate Oct' 18 1781.

Whereas the United States in Congress assembled have recommended opening a Subscription for a Loan, for the Support of Such of the citizens of the States of South-Carolina and Georgia as have been driven from their Country and Possessions, by the Enemy — And also voluntary and free Donations, to be applied to the further relief of the Said Sufferers,

Therefore

Resolved, That Samuel Adams, Isaac Smith and Thomas Russel, Esquires, be, and hereby are appointed, to open a Subscription for a Loan, to Such of the distressed Inhabitants of South-Carolina and Georgia, as have been driven from their Country and Possessions, by the Enemy, upon the Plan recommended by Congress: and that the monies that may be loaned be remitted by the abovenamed Gentlemen to the Committee appointed by Congress, for receiving Such Loans.

Resolved, That the Governor be, and is hereby requested to Issue a Brief, through the Several Towns and Districts, within this Commonwealth, recommending an attention to the distresses of Such of the Inhabitants of South-Carolina and Georgia as have been driven from their Country and Possessions, by the Enemy, and their charitable Contributions for their relief; and that Such monies as may be collected, be paid into the hands of Samuel Adams, Isaac Smith and Thomas Russel Esquires, to be by them remitted to the Committee appointed by Congress to receive Such Donations

Sent down for Concurrence

N^o 1

S ADAMS *Presid'*

In the House of Representatives Oct' 29, 1781

Read & concurred

NATH GORHAM *Speak'*

Approv'd JOHN HANCOCK

[Indorsed] Resolue appointing a Committee to open a Loan for the distressed Citizens of Charlestown South Carolina and requesting the

Governor to Issue a Brief thro' the Several Towns in this Commonwealth October 18 1781 page 95 & 6 [These figures refer to the pages of another volume, where this paper had previously been placed; and the "N^o 1," as given above, may imply other papers in the same file, but not necessarily bearing on the same subject.]

There is in the possession of this Society John Hancock's Letter-book for the period from November 7, 1780, to March 13, 1782, which was given to the Library on November 13, 1817, by Mrs. Dorothy Scott, whose first husband was Governor Hancock. Fortunately for our purpose a copy of the letter sent out to the Boston ministers enclosing the Brief is found in the book, and runs as follows:—

BOSTON 15th Nov^r 1781

REV^d SIR, I have the Honor to inclose you a Brief, which I request you will be pleased to read to the Society under your Pastoral Charge, in the Forenoon of the next Lords Day; & I am confident your Recommendation will induce a liberal Contribution in the Afternoon of the same Day, & answer the Benevolent purposes of the Brief.

I am, With Respect, Sir, Your very hble Serv^t

To

J H

The Rev ^d Doct ^r Chauncey	M ^r Elliott	M ^r Croswell
Doct Mather	M ^r Stillman	M ^r Howard
Doct Cooper	M ^r Parker	Elders of the Presbyterian
M ^r Lothrop	M ^r Skillman	Church
M ^r Wight	M ^r Lewis	

Rev^d Gentⁿ who officiates at the New South — M^r Acklie

The following item from "The Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser" (Boston), November 22, 1781, seems to fix the date when the Brief was read in the several churches of Boston, and presumably in those throughout the Commonwealth so far as they could be reached:—

Last Lord's Day [November 18] a Brief was read in the several Churches in this Town, and a generous Collection made for our unfortunate Brethren of South-Carolina and Georgia.

On the last page (183) of the record-book (not numbered as a volume, but begun on June 1, 1761) of the First Parish at Groton, Massachusetts, is found a list of the contributions made on special occasions by that Church between July 19, 1761, and February 19, 1795; and among these entries is the following:—

1781. The Congregation contributed twenty five Dollars in hard Decem^r 13. money & four Dollars' new Emission which are equal to one in hard, to the poor & distressed people in S. Carolina & Georgia, in Compliance with a Brief issued by His Excellency the Governor for that Purpose.

My friend Mr. William R. Cutter, of Woburn, informs me that contributions were raised in that town for the same object, and he sends me the copy of a receipt given by Mr. Isaac Smith, which reads as follows : —

Reu^d of the Town of Woburn, whereof the Rev^d M^r John Marret is pastor. Two pounds eleuen shillings & 2^d for the sufferers of S^o Carolina & Georgia —

£2.. 11. 2

W. ISAAC SMITH

[Indorsed] Boston Recate

The original of this paper is among the manuscripts of the Cutter Collection (No. 274) in the Woburn Public Library.

Dr. GREEN announced the death of S. A. R. le Comte de Paris, an Honorary Member, which took place at his residence, Stowe House, in Buckinghamshire, England, on September 8. He was the elder son of the Duc d'Orléans and grandson of Louis Philippe, and was born at the Tuileries in Paris, on August 24, 1838. When the War of the Rebellion broke out in this country, he and his brother, the Duc de Chartres, desirous to see active military service, came here and joined the Army of the Potomac on the staff of General McClellan, where they both worthily upheld the honor of their family. After nearly a year of camp life, they returned to England, and the Comte devoted himself to literary and social pursuits. His "History of the Civil War in America" (Philadelphia edition, four volumes) already ranks as an authoritative work of its kind. He was chosen a member of this Society on December 9, 1875, soon after the appearance of the first volume of his History.

Dr. GREEN also communicated, in behalf of Mr. Barrett Wendell, who is now in Europe, a memoir of the late Edwin L. Bynner, for publication in the Proceedings.

Mr. William Roscoe Thayer, of Cambridge, was elected a Resident Member.

A new serial, comprising the proceedings at the June meeting, was ready for distribution at this meeting.



Ermi L. Ryner.

MEMOIR
OF
EDWIN LASSETTER BYNNER, LL.B.

BY BARRETT WENDELL.

EDWIN LASSETTER BYNNER was born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 5, 1842. His father, Edwin Bynner, was English; his mother, Caroline Edgerton, came of a family which had resided in New England since 1645. About 1847 the family moved to Harvard, Massachusetts, Mrs. Bynner's birthplace. Here, in the hill country of Worcester County, they remained for seven years, the elder Bynner meanwhile attaining considerable local reputation as editor of a weekly paper in the neighboring town of Clinton. To Clinton they moved in 1854. Within a year they moved again to Worcester, where they lived until 1868. The education of Edwin Lassetter Bynner then, which began in the country schools of Harvard, was continued at the Worcester Academy. After leaving school he read law in the office of Foster and Nelson, at Worcester, whence, in 1863, he proceeded to the Harvard Law School. After taking the degree of LL.B. here in 1865, he went to St. Louis, and entered the office of Judge Drake. In 1868, when his family moved from Worcester to Boston, he returned to the East. For two years he was at the bar in New York. The sudden death of his father in December, 1870, determined him to take up his residence in Boston, where his sisters, left unprotected by their bereavement, found it best to remain; their mother had died in 1859. He was admitted to the Suffolk Bar, and continued a practising lawyer in Boston until his death, on August 5, 1893.

In February, 1890, he became a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society. He was already suffering from the

first symptoms of the illness from which he never recovered. Perhaps on that account he took little part in the proceedings of the Society. Few of its members, however, could have been more heartily interested in its traditions and its purposes ; for few men were ever at heart more enthusiastic antiquarians or more unaffected lovers of literature.

To many even of those who knew Bynner personally, indeed, the fact that he was a professional lawyer comes almost as a surprise. Among his friends, and still more to the public who knew him only by name, he seemed, so far as professional character went, distinctly a man of letters. From his father, whose editorial management of the little paper at Clinton was noteworthy, he inherited an instinctive aptitude for literature ; and while this did not declare itself by precocious publication, it was so strong and so true that when he once began writing he never stopped to the end.

His first novel, "Nimport," was published anonymously in the Wayside Series, in 1877. A year later it was followed by his second novel, "Tritons," and in 1881 by his third, "Damon's Ghost." These books, though they hardly gave evidence of his power, have a distinct quality of their own. In many respects amateurish, they have throughout a sort of wholesome enthusiasm which novel-readers are sure to like. Their plots, to be sure, are utterly impossible, and their characters by no means studied from the life. You cannot read half-a-dozen pages of them without final conviction of their utter unreality. At the same time you feel that nobody could have written them who had not keenly enjoyed the wholesome masterpieces of English fiction, who had not thoroughly felt the immense recreation which amid the business of troublesome life may be found in hearty rambles away to a fantastic world where things go right, or who was not impelled to his own writing by real love of the temporary freedom from reality which such work involves. As some one has said, you put down "Nimport" or "Tritons" or "Damon's Ghost" in a mood very like that in which you return from a performance of private theatricals. You are perfectly aware that this is neither real life nor seriously fine art ; at the same time you have felt, throughout this unaffected effort to give you pleasure, certain intangible qualities of amiable refinement which you should have far to seek elsewhere.

The unreal, amateurish, theatrical quality of these first novels is emphasized by the fact that their scene is laid in the very world where we live. Their fantasy, then, and their imitative conventionality are instantly brought to the test of comparison with actual experience. Whether Bynner's imagination would ever have taken a form which could quite have borne this test is perhaps questionable. A fortunate chance turned his attention to subjects of a very different character, for which his talent was peculiarly fitted.

These early novels had shown good qualities of style. They were easily, pleasantly written, with a certain whole-hearted dash and at the same time a lightness of touch such as are sure to appeal to people who really like to read. This marked literary faculty combined with his constant interest in the old history of New England, with the accuracy of mental habit which came from his legal training, and with the lasting personal regard which acquaintance with him always inspired, to make the committee in charge of the "Memorial History of Boston" confide to him, in 1880 and 1881, the chapters on the "Topography and Landmarks of the Colonial and Provincial Periods."

A more unpromising subject of research for many temperaments could hardly have been proposed. It required of course the most patient and elaborate attention to a sort of detail which is apt to interest only the individual concerned with the work in hand. It demanded, too, in the statement of its results, at once a rigorous condensation of style and an unswerving adherence to plain matters of fact which might well have been fatal to any enthusiasm but that of a Dry-as-dust. To Bynner, however, the work in question was probably more valuable than anything else could have been. The punctilious accuracy which it demanded was just the tonic he needed to strengthen the sense of actual fact in which his early novels had shown him artistically deficient. The strength of his fancy, which began to grow into a trait more fitly named imagination, meanwhile enlivened the dry records amid which he burrowed, with a constant sense that they were after all the relics of what had once been a living human world. Instead, then, of seeking relief from actuality in fantasies of contemporary unreality, he brought his strengthening literary power, and his ultimately remarkable knowledge of the details

of local history, to the task of reviving in imagination what had once been the facts of American life.

"Task," however, is hardly a fit word for the series of historical fictions by which he is best known. Though to himself the work of their composition may sometimes have been deliberately laborious, the result of that work never lacks the quality of apparently whole-hearted spontaneity which so atones for the shortcomings of his early novels. "Penelope's Suitors" — a short story dealing with the conjugal history of Governor Bellingham — was the first of his generally successful literary achievements. It appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly" for December, 1884. Encouraged by the success of this, he proceeded to write the book which is generally thought his best, "Agnes Surriage." This deals with the well-known story of Sir Harry Frankland's relations with the girl of Marblehead, who after a long series of adventures, culminating in her rescue of Sir Harry from the ruins of the Lisbon earthquake, became his wife.

The subject, essentially romantic, and, while virtually historical, constantly verging on improbability, was congenial to Bynner's taste and talent. The environment of the story was that very New England of provincial times with which his studies had made him thoroughly familiar. His style meanwhile, preserving its old vivacity and enthusiasm, had been strengthened by some years of practice. The result of his work is probably the best historical novel concerning New England which has ever been produced. It is not of course, like the great romances of Hawthorne, a lasting contribution to imaginative literature; nor yet can it quite bear comparison with the great historical fiction of England or France. In its own way, however, taken by itself for what it is, "Agnes Surriage" is an excellent book. With all the qualities which had marked his previous good work, it possesses a unity, a coherence, a grasp of his subject, a vigor in the handling of it, which make it a true work of art. Beyond any other contemporary novel, too, it revives the actual world which in New England preceded the Revolution. Very likely it resembles his earlier novels in a certain remoteness from real fact. A Yankee of King George II.'s time might have detected in it many touches of the same amiable unreality which is palpable to us in "Nimport" or the "Tritons." A generation like ours,

however, knows too little of the times with which "Agnes Surriage" deals to be troubled by its divergence from fact; at the same time any generation must heartily enjoy and appreciate its wholesome merits.

"Agnes Surriage" was published in the winter of 1886-1887. In October, 1887, appeared a whimsical story called "An Uncloseted Skeleton." In the "Atlantic Monthly," from May, 1889, till April, 1890, appeared his most ambitious and studied work, the "Begum's Daughter." This probably cost him more pains than anything else; but though a sound piece of historical fiction, it lacks the romantic charm of "Agnes Surriage." In the winter of 1891-1892 appeared a volume of short stories for children, entitled the "Chase of the Meteor." Finally, while troubled with the illness which ultimately proved fatal, he produced his last book, "Zachary Phips." This novel, published in 1892, recounts the adventures of a Yankee boy during the early years of the present century. He takes part in the Burr-Blennerhasset expedition; he fights in the naval battles of the War of 1812, and so on. More happens to him than could probably ever have happened to any real human being; and in the end he marries the maiden of high degree with whom everybody has been brought to wish him happiness. If, however, the combination of adventures be frankly incredible, each adventure by itself is plausible enough; and the book has a touch of that Odyssean rambling quality which makes one think of but a single episode at a time. Thus, the very disjointed nature of it, perhaps due to the languor of growing illness, becomes something like a merit. While not equal to "Agnes Surriage," and by no means so carefully studied as the "Begum's Daughter," it is such a tale of courageous adventure as all boys like and all grown folks are the better for liking.

It is as a novelist, then, — not a great novelist, but a thoroughly sound, wholesome, pure one, — that Bynner is best known. Certainly no other writer of the past twenty-five years has done more to revive in New England the memories of our own olden time, and to encourage thereby the survival among us of such traditions as bear fruit in manly patriotism. That Bynner had such didactic purpose in view is hardly probable. Temperamentally he was rather an artist than a preacher. He was so completely imbued with the spirit of his subject,

however, that he could not fail to awaken dormant interest in it ; thereby his work accomplished its patriotic purpose far more efficiently than if it had been consciously or palpably hortatory.

If the public remember Bynner chiefly as a novelist, those who had the fortune personally to know him will always remember him first as a man. To write of his personality adequately, of course one must have known him intimately ; yet even those who met him casually could not fail to recognize in him a quality of unusual personal charm. Unobtrusive, perfectly free from apparent self-consciousness, he had that not too common delicacy of good breeding which, while it inspires thorough freedom of thought and speech, neither gives nor receives the thoughtless confidentiality which giver and receiver alike are apt to regret. He was a man with whom one talked inevitably ; in the best sense of the word, he was always affable. One talked, however, not of one's own affairs or of his ; one talked of impersonal matters, in which the constant alertness of his sympathy was sure to arouse, even though it were not there before, a common interest.

To those who knew him well he was far more than an ordinary friend. In the "New England Magazine" for January, 1894, the Rev. Edward Everett Hale's affectionate memoir of him has a few words to say about his active interest in the affairs of the South Congregational Church. The trait thus shown is no longer as common as of old among the educated laymen of New England. To such laymen in general perhaps the possessors of this old-time trait generally present themselves as a shade priggish. About Bynner, however, there was no tincture of priggishness, or apparently of any quality not sympathetically human. To a man his friends — who very likely were not mutually intimate — felt for him a sentiment of more than usual affection. Nothing about his memory to-day is more notable than the number of persons — unlike among themselves except for the fact that all are soundly human — who feel each as if that memory were peculiarly his own.

Another thing which impresses one who knew Bynner is that he was not really a young man. He was past fifty years old ; by the almanac he was in advanced middle life. To his own contemporaries perhaps he seemed as old as they ; to

younger men, on the other hand, he had the rare faculty of seeming not a day their elder. Friendly human intercourse between men of the same generation is frequent, and almost as frequent is friendly human intercourse between men far enough apart in years to belong to distinct generations. It is rare, however, that an interval of a dozen or fifteen years — an interval not recognized by nature as normal to the human race — does not interpose some manner of barrier to friendship. With Bynner one was never conscious of it. To his elders, to his contemporaries, and to younger men alike he was always the same sympathetic human being who has no age at all. With all alike he has left such a memory as those who loved him best should wish.